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NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/SINGH/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2026

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: BERRI INFURIATED BY IDF RAID BUT CONTAINS
HIZBALLAH; ACCUSED IDF OF STEALING MONEY, JEWELRY

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri called the Ambassador twice on 8/19 to rant and rave about an Israeli raid (that he claimed included some ground operations) north of Baalback early that morning. "There is no way" that the Israelis can claim that such a raid was permitted under UNSCR 1701. The Israelis have broken the cessation of hostilities, and Berri said that he expected a "strong response" from the international community. Otherwise, he said, "who knows how Hizballah will answer." So far, Berri said in his second call, he has managed to "keep Hizballah quiet. But I can't do this again, if the Israelis do something else." (PM Siniora also complained strongly about the Israeli actions and also saw them as a violation of UNSCR 1701.)

¶2. (C) The Ambassador said that he knew only what he had seen in the news about the Biqa' raid. So he was not aware of the Israeli goals nor of any Israeli explanations. But, the Ambassador said, Lebanon needs to be taking tangible steps against arms smuggling across the porous Syrian border. Failure to do so is itself a violation of UNSCR 1701. The Israelis might very well be taking measures to prevent the resupply of rockets to Hizballah, given what seems to be a lack of Lebanese seriousness to combat the problem. Berri rejected the Ambassador's words, claiming that "you know very well we're moving the army to the area." Berri also said that "killing people" in the Biqa Valley, far from Israel, is definitely "offensive military operations," which are now supposed to be prohibited.

¶3. (C) In his second phone call, Berri also claimed that he had a report that he vowed was true from an Amal-supporting family in Mays al-Jebel, a Shia town near the Blue Line. At 2 a.m. that morning, a small group ("three or four") of IDF soldiers "came down from the hills where they were stationed" and broke into an occupied, private house, he said. The Israelis "turned the house upside down" and physically searched even the women and children, in an "insulting and unacceptable manner." Ultimately, Berri claimed, the Israelis found and stole USD 4,700 in cash, the family's entire financial means, and over USD 2,000 in jewelry that had been the matriarch's bridal dowry. "Are these soldiers or bandits?" Berri asked; "haram!" The Ambassador asked how credible Berri found the story. "100 percent true," he claimed. (Note: While we cannot speak for this particular case, in general we have heard few claims of Israeli looting. End note.)

FELTMAN